

**Families of HMM-261 (REIN) Raging Bulls:**

As we continue our deployment, I want to provide you all with a quick update on the deployment activities of the Raging Bulls of HMM-261 (REIN).

**HMM-261 (REIN) ARRIVES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN...**

Just over a week ago, the Marines and Sailors of the 22d MEU (SOC) finally arrived in the Mediterranean Ocean following a 10 day transit. Our movement across the Atlantic proved to be successful in re-qualifying our aircrews in shipboard deck landings and giving our maintenance Marines plenty of opportunities to fine tune our aircraft. Following a few days of rough seas, the Kearsarge Expeditionary Strike Group passed through the Strait of Gibraltar, with the USS Kearsarge heading directly for Malta for a well deserved liberty period. Upon arrival in Malta, the Raging Bulls participated in the customary "Manning of the Rails", looking exceptionally sharp in their Summer Service Charlie uniforms. Once pier side, the Squadron commenced 4 days of well earned liberty, enjoying the local cuisine, touring historic sites, and mingling among the wonderful people of Malta. Throughout the port visit the Raging Bulls also participated in a number of USS Kearsarge hosted social events, aircraft static displays, and community relations projects that allowed them to interact with local government officials, dignitaries, business leaders, and countless Maltese families. Whether mingling with a Maltese government official, or entertaining a local group of school children on the flight deck, they represented the best in our country, impressing all with their professionalism and politeness. With picture perfect weather each day, everyone found Malta to be an ideal location to reenergize their enthusiasm following our extensive and demanding pre-deployment training period.

Following our departure from Malta, we traveled eastward and arrived the next day in Souda Bay, Crete, where once again an opportunity was made available for liberty. During this brief one day visit, all embarked personnel were limited to "pier side liberty" and a quick run to the local Navy Exchange. Most of the Raging Bulls, however, chose to remain aboard ship in order to complete some much needed aircraft maintenance and administrative work. Despite the workload, the Raging Bulls were still able to muster a softball team that did quite well in a ship sponsored tournament. Although they didn't take first place, they nonetheless enjoyed themselves immensely! Now as we have returned to sea once again, we begin to sharpen our skills and prepare for what ever lays ahead. As always, I remain immensely proud and honored to be serving among your Raging Bulls! I encourage you to continue visiting the 22d MEU (SOC) website at [www.22meu.usmc.mil](http://www.22meu.usmc.mil) for further details and photographs of the Squadron's events as they are posted during the course of this deployment.

**KEEPING YOU INFORMED...**

If you should have any concerns, questions, or just need some moral support during our deployment, I encourage you to contact your Key Volunteer, Family Readiness Staff Non-commissioned Officer, our family hotline, or this website ([www.22meu.usmc.mil](http://www.22meu.usmc.mil)) to obtain up-to-date information you need to stay in touch. It is my intention to update the newsletter at least weekly in order to keep our families and friends updated on our deployment activities. Please keep in mind that official and factual information regarding the Squadron's movements, activities, and operations will come solely from the 22d MEU (SOC) Commanding Officer through me. ***Information sourced from me will only be delivered through the channels mentioned previously.***

Thanks again for your prayers and support. My best wishes to our families and friends back home!

Rage On!

James G. Flynn  
Lieutenant Colonel, USMC  
Commanding Officer

Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 261 (Reinforced)  
22d Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable)